



Town of Rowe
Board of Selectmen Minutes
Thursday February 4, 2021–5:00 p.m.
VIA TELECONFERENCE

Meetings normally held at the Municipal Offices are being held remotely, with adequate, alternative means of public access and, where required, public participation provided, in accordance with the Governor's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c.30A § 20.

Board of Selectmen: Chair Charles Sokol, Selectman Ed Silva , Vice-Chair Joanne Semanie

Audience: Emily Boss, Franklin Land Trust, Rowe Finance Committee: Chair Wayne Zavotka, Vice-Chair Loretta Dionne, Christopher "Selmi" Hyytinen, Paul McLatchy III, Laurie Pike, Chief Shippee, Chief Annear

Call to Order: Chair Sokol called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M.

Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Selectman Silva – yes Vice-Chair Semanie- yes (Vote: 3-0-0)

Noteworthy Announcements (as needed): None

Announcement of recording devices: one

Appointment: 5:00 p.m. – Emily Boss- Request from Franklin Land Trust – Warner Hill Wildlife Corridor Landscape Partnership Grant:

- Ms. Boss explained that due to the issues with land titles holding mineral rights for heirs of 2 properties and the inability to clear the titles fully of the claims, all but 100 acres of 800 acres can move forward on the Warner Hill Wildlife Corridor project. Franklin Land Trust will perform the monitoring of the lands under the conservation restriction with no liability to the town. Conservation restriction holders have liability protections. Responding to the question about the cellar holes on the land in question, Ms. Boss said there will be efforts made to make safer.
- Next steps will be to have Franklin Land Trust Counsel draft the conservation restrictions and present it to the town for Town Counsel review by late March with a project close out in mid-May. It was noted that the taxes for the properties may or may not change and that Assessors Chair Williams said it would be under \$2000.00.
- Trail system will be reviewed by the Franklin Land Trust and landowners decide about hunting restrictions.

Emily Boss left the meeting at 5:14 p.m.

Unforeseen Business (within preceding 48 hours): Executive Secretary said that Superintendent Larned brought up the need for the sand/salt policy since there was an immediate situation to address. He asked that the Board establish one since an entity was using a great deal of product. Past arrangements were reviewed and discussed. The following policy was developed:

Sand/Salt Policy:

The Town of Rowe permits residents to remove sand and salt in reasonable quantities from the Town Garage. Use of salt and sand is for residential use only and may not be used for commercial, industrial, or non-profit purposes. Contractors providing services to the town may utilize town-provided sand and salt only for town-related work and may not use product for other projects. Residents found to be violating this policy will have their privileges suspended by the Board of Selectmen.

Minutes:

1. Minutes of January 19, 2021 - Covid Group:
2. Minutes of January 26, 2021 – Covid Group:

MOTION TO APPROVE: Chair Sokol made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Covid-19 Group meeting of January 19, 2021 and January 26, 2021 as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie.

Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Vice-Chair Semanie- yes (Vote: 2-0-1)
Ed Silva- abstained from the vote

3. Minutes of January 21, 2021:

MOTION TO APPROVE: Chair Sokol made a motion to approve the Minutes of the meeting of January 21, 2021 as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie.

Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Vice-Chair Semanie- yes (Vote: 2-0-1)
Ed Silva- abstained from the vote

4. Minutes of January 25, 2021:

MOTION TO APPROVE: Chair Sokol made a motion to approve the Minutes of the meeting of January 25, 2021 as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie.

Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Ed Silva- yes Vice-Chair Semanie- yes (Vote: 3-0-0)

Selectboard Business:

New Business:

1. **Local Technical Assistance Request Form FRCOG:**
Selectmen discussed the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) request for selecting projects or priorities they would like to focus on in FY22. FRCOG funding for potential projects come from Mass State Community Compact Best Practices program. Following discussion, the 3 top priorities are: 1- Vaccination Planning, Delivery and Review 2- Public Safety Sharing 3- Shared facilities management of municipal building and grounds.

2. Selectman Silva: Discuss tax exempt status of Rowe Camp & Conference Center:

Chair Sokol said the Board of Assessors and the Board of Health were currently working on issues related to some properties of the Rowe Camp and Conference Center. Vice-Chair Semanie said the Assessors are looking into the tax status at end of the fiscal year and that the Board of Health is working with the Camp on a 'Change in Status' permit. She further stated that a 'Change in Status' permit might affect an individual building. The question was whether short term rentals would change their tax-exempt status by exceeding an established threshold. Vice-Chair Semanie said that each individual property at the Camp is assessed separately, however, no taxes were being paid on the properties. In total taxes if paid would amount to \$12,000.00. Vice-Chair said she had spoken with the Board of Assessors' Chair and due to Covid he understood that they would revisit later after Covid subsides since it is changing the way they do business. Selectman Silva inquired about the limit of how much non-profit can take in. Selectman Silva thought it would be good to contact Town Counsel since in a prior conversation with him, he mentioned there it might be an avenue for those folks to be paying taxes. Chair Sokol said it might be good to know if there is a limit to what a non-profit can own. It was decided to have the Boards involved at a future meeting to discuss. Vice-Chair Semanie said she would set up a meeting to discuss.

3. MassDOT Bridge Inspection Report- Depot St. over Deerfield River Bridge:

Selectmen review the Mass Dept. of Transportation (MassDOT) Inspection report for the Depot St. Bridge which indicated was in good condition. No action required at this time.

Old Business:

1. Draft Overtime Policy:

Selectmen reviewed an updated Overtime Policy to be added to the Personnel Policy Manual. Selectmen to review amendments and discuss at the next meeting.

2. Wage and Salary Chart Follow-up: Tabled until a later date

3. Wage and Salary Reporting Question: Administrative Assistant asked whether the Board wanted to add the inclusion of wages and salaries for transparency. There was discussion about the value of presenting this information and that presented in this manner might be misleading since it did not address relevant details such as the fact that some positions were paid by grants as well as not offering the detail amount if a person held multiple position. It was noted that some towns offer this information. It was decided to send the information to the Board for review to decide.

Contracts/Warrants:

1. Warrant Review: Review Warrants FY21 W016 and FY21 PW16

Administrative Office Updates:

1. Executive Secretary Updates: Reviewed by Selectmen

– Action Items Follow up

2. Administrative Assistant Updates: Reviewed by Selectmen

Appointments starting at 6:00 p.m.:

FY22 Budget Hearings:

Police Department

Training: Chief Shippee said that due to the Police Reform Bill recently passed by the Mass State Legislature that new certification requirements added training of 500 hours for each officer.

Training is currently set at 40 hours mandatory for each officer. The new certification training may be taken over the course of 3 years for other officers. Training is a mix of online and in person.

1. There were questions about paying for training of an officer that works on one day a year or on Old Home Day and that the established practice was to pay for part-time Officer and part-time reserve officer and not auxiliary or special officers who worked on Old Home Day or on call for detail duty.
2. Laurie Pike asked if there would be financial support available for the small towns that may not be able to fund these training requirements.
3. Paul McLatchy III said Town Counsel will be issuing a memo regarding the Police Reform requirements soon.

Future Cruiser: Paul McLatchy III said that due to Green Community Requirements that environmentally friendly cruisers will have to be looked at in the future

Police Chief left the meeting at 6:41 p.m.

Fire Chief Annear joined the meeting at 6:41 p.m.

Fire Department

FY22 Budget: Projected FY22 Budget up by 2.69%

- Shift Worker not hired yet, the hope is to get it by the last quarter
- Shared Chief Vehicle Rowe pays ½ of with Charlemont was the original agreement or purchase of a new one. Chief recommended Rowe purchase the vehicle and bill Charlemont for the use. Current vehicle has 225,000 miles and has had \$5,000.00 into it so far this year due to full exhaust system, brakes, tie rod ends and 4 new shocks. Rowe's portion is about \$2500 this year towards vehicle. The purchase he recommended is for \$65,000.00.

Special Projects:

- Meeting with Architect to make the Safety Complex more compliant with OSHA requirements and space needs 10-15k bill for Police and Fire space. Chief Annear will give cost for Architect estimate work to formulate a plan. Separation of storage equipment to meet OSHA standards especially gear stored in the men's room.
- A New roof needed it is over 35 years old and needs attention.
- Purchase lockable racks to store fire gear to comply with OSHA & NFPA standards for \$8,000.00
- Purchase equipment to facilitate wilderness rescue \$4,500.00

Other Dept. News:

- Chief Annear said the regarding the Shared Services Agreement with Charlemont, he is in discussion Charlemont as they have a succession planning grant to plan for his impending retirement.
- Chief Annear said wearing masks very good
- The Town of Greenfield will be taking on vaccinations program for vaccination outreach
- The Fire Dept. Staff is 12 total
- Chief Annear said Rowe has not required vaccine inoculation. If an individual refuses he has had them sign the paperwork saying they chose not to accept the vaccine.

Chief Annear left the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Park Manager joined the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

Park

- There are some small changes, and the goal is to bring wages up to minimum wage.
- The change in Operations because of COVID last year were reduced and brought back this year

- It was noted that if the Grasshopper program could not take place due to COVID that the Park could employ the youth at the Park for trail projects.
- Special Projects: There are 2 special projects this year and one is for tree removal at Percy Point and working on getting estimates. The second project is a Trail Assessment part of the Forest Management plan around \$4500. For mapping trail and assessment and develop phone applications and potential Training staff on maintenance and software.
Park Ranger vehicle is 14 years old and needs to be replaced and more suitable for utility work replacement cost is 25,000.00 to 35,000.00. Replacement of the vehicle in its current configuration would cost \$16,000 to \$17,000.00.
Paul McLatchy III said that he would examine the Green Community guidelines requiring towns meet certain standards since we are a Green Community.

Town Clerk

- Would like the warden to get training since they oversee elections.
- Increase wages to Warden and Other workers to minimum \$14.25
- Trainings were not being held last year
- Everything is level funded and did not request 2.5% COLA for Town Clerk Stipend and that an average of 5-6 hours per week and felt that the position is overpaid
- Election costs are costs that cannot be controlled

Future Meetings:

Selmi said that he would like to see each dept. show the cost of the insuring vehicles and add Insurance cost to each dept. It was agreed to meet at 6:30 on Tuesday, February 9th to discuss Insurance Reporting options.

7:43 p.m. Finance Committee left the meeting.

Adjournment:

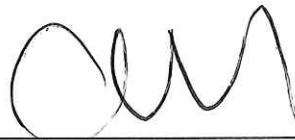
MOTION TO ADJOURN: Chair Sokol made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 p.m.
The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie.

Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Selectman Silva- yes Vice-Chair Semanie- yes (Vote: 3-0-0)

Respectfully Submitted,
Janice Boudreau, Executive Secretary

Approval Date: February 11, 2021

Approved:



Chuck Sokol, Chair



Ed Silva, Selectman



Joanne Semanie, Vice-Chair

Documents:

1. Agenda February 4, 2021
2. Email from Charlemont Select Board Member Willis
3. Email Response from Emily Boss – Franklin Land Trust
4. Executive Secretary: Research on Mineral Rights and Conservation Restriction
5. Minutes of January 19, 2021 - Covid Group
6. Minutes of January 21, 2021
7. Minutes of January 25, 2021
8. Minutes of January 26, 2021 – Covid Group
9. Local Technical Assistance Request Form FRCOG
10. MassDOT Bridge Inspection Report- Depot St. over Deerfield River Bridge
11. Draft Overtime Policy
12. Wage & Salary Draft – Administrative Assistant
13. FY22 Budget Request- Park Dept.
14. FY22 Budget Request- Police Dept.
15. FY22 Budget Request- Fire Dept.
16. FY22 Budget Request- Town Clerk
17. Executive Secretary Updates
18. Administrative Assistant Updates

Mail:

1. DEP Water Surveys: Town Hall, Avery Fountain & Pelham Lake